

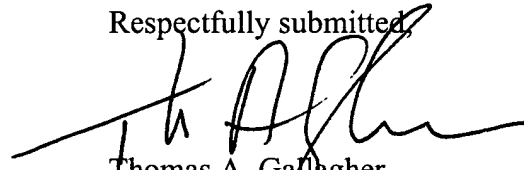
REMARKS

Claims 1-16 are pending in the application. Claims 14-16 are allowed. Claims 5 and 6 are indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claim 9 was previously canceled. Independent claims 1 and 10 are currently amended.

The undersigned spoke by telephone with Examiner Marsh on January 7, 2004 regarding this amendment. The Examiner agreed that the amendment presented herein would render the claims allowable over the art of record. The Examiner also offered the opinion that this amendment would not raise new issues and could be entered after final Rejection. However, the Examiner stated that his supervisor would have to agree on the entry of this amendment after final Rejection and that his supervisor would not be available until after the due date of this amendment. Therefore, in order to expedite the allowance of claims in this application, the Applicant has included a Request for Continued Examination (RCE) together with the additional small entity filing fee. It is requested that if the Examiner's supervisor determines that the RCE was unnecessary, the additional filing fee be refunded to Deposit Account #07-0139.

In light of all of the above, it is submitted that the claims are in order for allowance, and prompt allowance is earnestly requested. Should any issues remain outstanding, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney of record so that the case may proceed expeditiously to allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. A. Gallagher', written over the typed name.

Thomas A. Gallagher
Reg. No. 31,358
Attorney for Applicant(s)

65 Woods End Road
Stamford, CT 06905
(203) 329-9898

January 9, 2004